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THE CLASSIFICATION OF SOCIAL PHENOMENA

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Special social sciences like politics, jurisprudence, and economics investigate each some particular division of social reality, and if there is any science that should attempt to classify *all* social phenomena and chart the whole field of social reality it must be general sociology.

To classify the phenomena of a given kind it is necessary to recognize the important resemblances and differences by which they are characterized. Any of the phenomena to be classified which are united by an important resemblance are at the same time differentiated from all the rest that do not share the resemblance, and so constitute a class. The difference between the phenomena included in a class and those excluded from it may be merely that the quality characteristic of the class is possessed in a less *degree* by those excluded than by those included; differences in measurement are of this sort. The ideal criterion of a class would be a difference in *kind*, a quality possessed by the members of a class and entirely absent from all cases outside the class.

Phenomena that have many distinct markings or characteristics may be classified in a great variety of ways. A single phenomenon may by virtue of one trait belong to one class, and by virtue of some other trait which it also possesses it may belong to another class very differently made up; thus a given fruit may belong to the class "apples," and also the class "red fruits," which includes some apples, excludes some apples, and includes a great many fruits not apples. This also illustrates the fact that some classifications which are truthful and perhaps interesting and even striking are of slender scientific importance, and students may be long in hitting upon the classification

which rests upon the most essential resemblances and differences of the phenomena studied. Since the same phenomena may be classified in many different ways according to the criteria selected, the same phenomenon, by reference to different criteria, being assigned to several very different groups, it follows that attempts at classification may result, not in simplicity and grasp, but in the most bewildering confusion.

In an ideally systematic classification each fact would have its one place, and no single fact could appear in two co-ordinate divisions. This systematic requirement is endangered, as illustrated by the apples and red fruits, whenever more than one criterion is used in identifying co-ordinate classes. By using a single criterion or principle of classification, any phenomena, not absolutely homogeneous, may always be divided into two co-ordinate and mutually exclusive groups, those possessing and those not possessing the chosen qualitative or quantitative mark. It may be, however, that no single principle of classification affords a basis for dividing the phenomena to be studied into *more than two* co-ordinate groups. Therefore the only method that is sure to afford a systematic division of any phenomena, whatever they may be, is to make two mutually exclusive classes and then divide each of these into two mutually exclusive subclasses, and so on. But it may easily be that the traits which would have to be selected as criteria in order to effect this would not mark the most essential resemblances and differences which characterize the phenomena studied, so that the classification, though systematic, would have little or no scientific value. Complex phenomena in the real world do not supply themselves with essential traits with reference to our convenience in classifying them.

Fortunately for science absolutely systematic classification is not essential, yet some sort of manageable subdivision of a vast field is necessary for convenience, and if it is a reasonable one it may be an invaluable aid to comprehension. If productive divisions of labor are to be made, and explanations reached which are steps toward a general synthesis of comprehension, if the descriptions of sociology are to be, not like the traveler's descrip-

tion of a landscape, but like the botanist's report upon a flora, its plants identified according to their species, then some reasonable classification of all the social phenomena is to be desired. Although we have now outgrown the emphasis upon classification which once caused it to be regarded as the end of scientific endeavor, rather than as a step toward consistent and truthful explanation, yet the history of science teaches the importance of classification, both as a phase of intellectual mastery, and as an aid to the further progress of comprehension. Indeed the word classification is of late sometimes so used as to restore it to its old place as the symbol of all scientific achievement, by making it a synonym for "analysis and synthesis." Classification is at least an outline summary of the results of analysis up to date. Further analysis may require the reconstruction of classification, or it may simply fill out with further particulars a truthful classification already sketched. Sociologists, confronting their vast and complex object-matter, from the beginning have sought to analyze it, and have needed to do so lest their labor should become a mere beating of wings in endless verbiage and discussion, and they must continue to require it for individual guidance, and as a means of scientific co-operation, as a manageable summary, and as a guide to further advance.

A brief consideration of some of the classifications which have been proposed by different sociologists will throw light upon the subject.

Existing classifications are, roughly, of two sorts: those which have resulted from the adoption of a principle of analysis and which therefore depend for their truthfulness and usefulness upon the correctness and fundamental character of the principle upon which they are based; and second, those which have been formed by sociologists who, enunciating no principle of classification, have simply tabulated under separate heads social phenomena which seem strikingly different from each other, without special reference to the kind of differences that separate the classes, or the kind of resemblances that unite phenomena placed in the same class. Something can be said for

such unprincipled classification, since it is shaped by looking at the facts, and is not the offspring of any theoretical preconception. But such classification is not sure to be all-inclusive, different observers are not at all sure to agree in classifications thus formed, and if there is a general principle by the application of which social phenomena can be classified there is good reason for wishing to discover it.

As an example of such purely empirical classification, apparently based upon no adopted principle, may be cited the following list made by Tarde. As he applies the laws of imitation to the salient social phenomena which arrest his attention, they present themselves to his observation as of six sorts. That this list of six headings does not merely enumerate a series of examples, but does for his mind constitute an orderly outline of the whole field of social reality, seems to be indicated when he says¹ that his formula of evolution "sums up the whole development of every civilization," and that "this formula applies even better to each of the partial developments of a society—that is to say to the evolution of each of its separate elements, to language, religion, government, law, industry, art, and morality." Then proposing to apply his theory "to the different aspects of social life" he devotes a section to each of these six heads: I, Language; II, Religion; III, Government; IV, Legislation; V, Economic Usages and Wants; VI, Morals and Arts.

The social realities which Tarde classifies under these six captions are activities, seen in their essential character as psychic entities; in his phraseology they are "beliefs" and "desires." Thus for Tarde the social phenomena of *government* are not alone the acts of officials, but even more the beliefs and sentiments current among the people, which confer upon individuals, oligarchies, and parties the political power which they enjoy. A king of Dahomey does not slaughter his subjects at will because of power that resides in him as a man, but he and other sovereigns rule by virtue of the unwritten constitution of the social situation, which exists in the minds of the people ruled, and is stable or changes as their beliefs and desires continue

¹ *Laws of Imitation*, 254.

or alter. Likewise for Tarde the fundamental *economic* facts are the likings for particular commodities, and the customs or fashions that require particular utensils, together with the varying arts and devices by which they are produced. His union under one head, of *morals and arts*, is suggestive of the view that preferences for objects to be admired and for conduct to be approved are alike matters of variable taste and sentiment. Their variability at different times and places is, however, not incongruous with the theory that as experience is interpreted by insight, moral requirements may come to be grounded in the logical conclusions of practical reason, which gradually discerns the operation of the law of cause and effect in destroying or securing human welfare; a law which is universal though its actual requirements differ under different conditions, and its supposed requirements have varied yet more widely and fantastically.

With that of Tarde may be contrasted the classification proposed by Herbert Spencer which is to be found in his chapter on the "Scope of Sociology."² He says that sociology sets out with primitive man and external nature interacting and progressively modifying each other, and that the science proposes to give an account of all the phenomena that result from their combined actions; the field for study thus indicated he divides as follows:

I. *The Family*, he places first in order, as the simplest and most essential product of those combined actions.

II. Next stand the *political organizations*, which have their root in "the fear of the living."

III. Then come *ecclesiastical* structures and their functions, which, he says, have their origin in "the fear of the dead."

IV. The *ceremonial* system, earlier in time than either the political or ecclesiastical, regulates the minor actions.

V. The four preceding are all co-ordinating or regulating structures and functions; the fifth to be enumerated are the operative or *industrial*. The most important inquiries concern the relation between the regulative and the operative, including

² *Principles of Sociology*, I, 437 ff.

their gradual separation from each other, and the growth of regulative structures within the operative, such as guilds and unions (to which most modern writers would add, quite against the will of Spencer, the problem of the renewed and extended relationship between developed operative structures and the agencies of political control). The developed industrial system, according to Spencer, would have, besides the operative part, a developed regulative part within itself, and the operative structure would be subdivided into productive and distributive parts with various divisions of labor in each.

VI. The five preceding sets of "structures and functions" are thought of by Spencer as constituting the organization and life of society; but closely related to them are *language*, *knowledge*, *morals*, and *aesthetics*, the development of which he regards, not exactly as included in social evolution, but as "accompanying social progress," "furthering it," "and furthered by it," so that the study of their development he includes within the scope of sociology.

The first five divisions in Spencer's classification consist of a series of different "organizations and institutions"; and because, unlike Tarde, he has not conceived the social realities as inter-related *activities*, but regards men, rather than the activities of men, as the social units or atoms, therefore he merely appends the division which comprises language, morals, and aesthetics, and speaks of them as related to the social phenomena, instead of seeing that they belong to the very core of the social phenomena. Nevertheless in his investigations and discussions, as in those of every other writer who has made important contributions to sociology, it is the activities of men in society which are the chief objects of his explanation.

The Belgian sociologist, Guillaume de Greef, has given special prominence in his writings to the subject of classification. The classification of De Greef is as follows:³ I, Economic Phenomena; II, Genetic Phenomena; III, Artistic Phenomena; IV, Phenomena of Belief; V, Moral Phenomena; VI, Juridical Phe-

³ *Introduction to Sociology*, 214.

nomena; VII, Political Phenomena (Basal Factors, inorganic and organic: territory and population).

De Greef would by no means admit that his list was formed without the guidance of a principle of classification. He claims that in each of his seven classes he has put together the phenomena which are of a similar degree of simplicity and universality, or complexity and particularity. However, it may not be unfair to think that he adopted the seven classes with little or no reference to this principle, and then made a more or less successful attempt to arrange them in an *order* corresponding to the principle which Comte employed in arranging the sciences in his famous hierarchy. De Greef lays stress upon the claim that his is a hierarchical classification, in which the order of the groups is highly important, and that in proceeding from the first up to the seventh he passes from the most simple and universal social phenomena up to those which are most complex and highly special. The simplest of all, he says, are the economic phenomena, and these are also universal; and the genetic are only less so, being universally present in all surviving groups, though not universally participated in by all the individual members of groups; while the political activities are the most special and complex of all the social phenomena.

The political activities, says De Greef, are not merely the highest with reference to their complexity and special variations from society to society, but also with respect to the fact that political activities regulate and control all of the others, down to the economic, where hours of labor, rights of property and contract, etc., are legally limited, prescribed, and enforced. Thus it follows that while "social progress depends first of all upon economic reforms, these latter require the extension and perfection of our representative, political, and legislative systems."⁴

Further, he adds, not only are the higher social activities dependent on the lower, while the lower are shaped and regulated by the higher, but also each particular category of the seven corresponds to a naturally distinct set of social organs and functions.⁵ Finally all of the elements, which by a process of nature

⁴ *Les lois sociologiques* (3d ed.), 91.

⁵ *Introduction to Sociology*, Part II.

combine so as to form the superorganic social reality are included in the two fundamental realities, territory and population.

No sociologist doubts the correlation of different kinds of social activity by which each kind of social activity depends upon activity of other kinds, and in turn modifies these others upon which it depends, but it may be doubted whether a fixed hierarchical order has been discovered which cannot be altered without sacrifice of logic. Economic activities are indeed the most general, as being participated in by all societies and by every associate, and also as present in the form of consumption wherever the other social activities exist, so that economic activities are scarcely, if at all, less universal than physical life. But it is by no means so easy to make convincing the other steps in rearing the hierarchy; and even in the case of economic activities we may well doubt whether they are in their nature any "more simple" or "less complex" than others.

We come now to consider an attempt to form the classes into which social realities could be divided under actual guidance of a thoroughly distinct general principle, namely the principle that human activities are prompted by desires, that the human desires may be classified, and that this affords the basis for a corresponding classification of the social activities to which these desires give rise, together with the resulting relationships, institutions, groupings, and whatever may be included in the social reality. Such an attempt is made by Professor Fairbanks in his *Introduction to Sociology*.⁶

In the opening paragraph of his seventh chapter he thus emphasizes the importance of such classification:

The student desiring to understand the complex life of society and the lines of its development, finds himself in difficulty at the outset, because of the confused variety of phenomena that present themselves to him. The first work of the new science of society, the classification of social phenomena, has not yet been done with any success, . . . and the failure (to agree on some common foundation) has proved almost fatal to any real progress in the science. [Yet] the scientific value of a true classification lies not so much in its convenience, or in its function as the basis of any successful union among students—important though these undoubtedly are

⁶ A work first published in 1896, which has usefully passed through three editions.

—as in the fact that it represents in itself the fundamental relations of the phenomena under consideration.⁷

He adds, there is but “one really natural method of classification,” and that is the genetic or causal, and having listed the “needs and emotions” which are “the causes of social activity,” we can give without hesitation the classification of social activities according to the stimuli from which they spring. Professor Fairbanks then proposes four main classes: “Economic,” “Social” (including domestic), “Political” (and legal), “Psychical.” These he subdivides so as to yield seven classes as follows:

I. *Economic activity*.—The need of food he says is “the original spur to social activity,”⁸ second to this being the need of protection against cold and wet. Upon these two, in his opinion, the whole economic division of social activity depends.⁹

II. *Social activity*.—Under this head Professor Fairbanks includes the activities which he says are due to “emotions,”¹⁰ which he divides into the egoistic emotions such as envy, jealousy, rivalry, anger, and revenge, and the sympathetic emotions, appearing either as “general” sympathy with the pleasure, fear, or other state of feeling of a whole group, or as “directed toward particular individuals” in personal affections and enmities.

III. *The political activities*.—These, like Spencer, he attributes to the need of protection against fellow-men.

These first three classes he regards as the original social activities, expressive of the earliest wants of man. The four additional classes which complete his list of seven are due, he says, to “non-essential” or “derived” wants. These four additional classes taken together he denominates “the psychical activity of society”; they are as follows:

IV. *The aesthetic activities*.

V. *The intellectual activities* and institutions.

VI. *Moral activity* and moral institutions.

VII. *Religious activities* and institutions.

Although it is done at the suggestion of popular usage yet it seems a strange thing to adopt the phrase “social activity” as

⁷ *Op. cit.*, 135, 136 (3d ed.); 108 (1st ed.).

⁸ *Ibid.*, 121.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 124, 137.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 128, 141.

the designation of one class of social activities, as Fairbanks does. His use of the words "emotion" and "psychic" also appears somewhat too careless for purposes of systematic nomenclature. To employ the word emotion as the titular designation for one group of motives (sociability, sympathy, rivalry, and their congeners) is to imply that none of the other desires which he discusses as springs of social activity are emotions, not even fear, nor the aesthetic, moral, or religious feelings. And to designate four of the seven classes of social activity as "psychic" is to disregard the fact that all social activities, as activities, are equally psychic, desiring and preparing a dinner as truly as desiring and carving a statue, planning and executing a rotation of crops as truly as experimentation in the laboratory or reflection in the study or even prayers and rites in a cathedral; intercourse with a Divine Companion falling under his seventh head he would class as "psychic" activity but not the intercourse of human association, nor any activity arising from the "essential and original" wants of man. This indicates that with all his penetration, even though frequently using the phrase "social activity," Fairbanks, like others, does not sufficiently apprehend that prevalent activities (which are psychic phenomena) are the social reality, and the objects of sociological classification and investigation; that social organizations are systems of differentiated and correlated activity; that the social process as a whole is a system of interrelated activities.

Besides Professor Fairbanks a considerable number of distinguished sociologists have made classifications of human "desires" or "interests" regarded as "the social forces" and the "causes" of social realities. They differ in the extent to which they employ their classification of desires as a means of classifying the activities to which they are supposed to give rise. Reference to other tabulations of "social forces" is postponed to the next chapter, where the validity of such a theory of social causation will be discussed. Here it is sufficient to point out that tracing social facts to their real or supposed origin in human desires does not afford a trustworthy principle for their classification.

To make this evident it is only necessary to observe that similar social activities arise from the most diverse motives. The tramp saws wood to pay for his breakfast and satisfy a physical desire, the only one perhaps that is strong enough to make him work. The pioneer saws wood to warm his newborn child and its mother, prompted by domestic affections that do not prompt the tramp to assume responsibilities. The student saws wood on Saturday to help him to appease an intellectual craving. The lover saws wood for money with which to take his sweetheart to a dance. And the convert who has joined a mission band saws wood in order to contribute the proceeds to help convert the heathen. If this be true of so simple an act as sawing wood, what shall we say of the economic activities as a whole? They are prompted by every desire, the satisfaction of which may be promoted by the use of material goods, that is to say, by every kind of desire known to man. The like is not true of economic activities alone but of activities of every other sort. Political activities are carried on, not for "protection" alone, but under the promptings of every motive and ambition. The intellectual activities of the student may be prompted by intellectual desires, but quite as often by the desire for commendation, or influence, or the hope of later earning a comfortable livelihood; and the teacher and investigator may not rise above being prompted to intellectual tasks by desires for money, or that which money buys, or for fame, or for whatever may be acquired by exercising the power which knowledge is. Even aesthetic arts are practiced for love of money, fame, or woman, and prayer itself may seek, not only the joy of communion with God, but physical health, plenty in basket and store, the prosperity of all personal undertakings, immunity from every possible evil from which the unseen powers may protect or which they may inflict in this world and whatever can be imagined for the world to come.

Every kind of activity seems to be pursued not alone for its own sake, and for the characteristic satisfaction inherent in the activity itself, but also *as a means* to other satisfactions of the most varying sorts, so that the desire which prompts a given

action need not pertain to the action itself but to some remoter experience, and therefore is no criterion for classifying the given actions. Even arts and social functions which ostensibly are pleasures in themselves are far from being prompted solely by the pleasure they contain; and most of social activity is work, not even ostensibly done for the satisfaction it contains but to secure a pleasure or to avoid a pain that lies beyond it. Therefore to attempt to classify social actions by the desires that prompt them is to adopt a criterion which does not inhere in the phenomena classified by reference to it, but belongs to other anticipated activities and experiences which exist in the minds of actors, where they are frequently quite beyond the observation or inference of the classifying investigator.

Having illustrated the fact that activities of the same class arise from various desires or human "interests," it is unnecessary to illustrate separately the corresponding fact that diverse activities are prompted by the same desires or human interests; so that if we could put into one class all the activities which are prompted by a given kind of "desire" or "interest" we should get not one class of activities unified by a fundamental underlying principle of homogeneity, but instead we should have the most complex jumble, made up of elements taken from every section of the social reality, and should in fact be no nearer to a classification than before but farther from it, having accepted the illusive appearance of classification and further complicated confusion.

Two other classifications, more elaborate than any of the preceding, are proposed by Professor Ross and Professor Giddings.

Professor Ross does not conceive the *essential* social phenomena in terms of process, or regard them as activities. On the contrary he says that the phenomena with which "sociology proper" has to deal, are "groups and structures"¹¹ as contrasted with the "planes and currents" of social activity. He does give prominence to the phrase "social process," but instead of employing the word "processes" as a designation of the social activities

¹¹ *Social Psychology*, 2.

themselves, which are the phenomena to be explained, he uses it as a general heading under which to put a variety of factors and phases in the development of societies, some of which cannot be described in their essence as processes. His "map of the sociological field"¹² is divided into three parts: first, "processes" or factors and phases in the development of societies; second, "subjective products," the "uniformities" or "planes and currents" of activity including "languages," "religions," "customs," "imperatives," "institutions," etc. (the phenomena which I regard as the objects to be explained by sociology), and third, "objective products," or "groupings and relations," which *he* regards as the objects of explanation proper to sociology.

Professor Ross sets out, as nearly or quite all sociologists have begun by doing, with the notion that social reality is something external and non-psychic. But in common with the rest of those who make real contributions to sociology, his actual contributions are studies of the objective psychic world, the prevalent beliefs, valuations, and conduct, which compose the life of associated human beings. However stoutly the opposite may be professed, the real contributions to sociology by whomsoever made are contributions to the explanation of this psychic world. For example, Bouglé studies the "Forms of Society" as favorable or unfavorable to "Les idées égalitaires"; the work of Tonnies and even that of Simmel himself are studies of the conditioning of human activity. Simmel is the arch protester that the abstract forms of association are the object-matter of sociology, but his brilliant work is nothing else than a contribution to generalization concerning conditioning relations as determinants of social activity. Society is in essence the inter-related activities of men. It may be the common-sense view that society is non-psychic. But the business of science is to replace common-sense with uncommon sense; and all the men of uncommon sense who have been profitably studying society have been studying the conditioning of prevalent social activities.

Apparently men shrink from the statement that social phenomena are psychic and that the physical facts which are of

¹² *Foundations of Sociology*, 98.

interest to sociology are so because of being either *conditions* or *manifestations* of psychic phenomena. Do they feel as if psychic phenomena were less real than "groupings" and "forms of association"; or do they fear that such a statement would reduce sociology to a mere "upper story of psychology"? What if it should? But does it? Is not the importance of sociology as a distinct science of prevalent concrete psychic realities made clear by such considerations as those proposed in the *Journal of Sociology* (XIV, 371 ff.)? Refusal to admit the psychic essence of social realities, instead of vindicating sociology as a distinct science, compels Professor Ross to state that his own inestimable contributions to sociology are not contributions to "sociology proper."

The "objective" products which he regards as the objects of study for sociology proper and which he tabulates under the two heads "Relations" and "Groupings" include, under the head "Relations": "fellowship," "reciprocity," "discipleship," and the like, all of which, let it be observed, consist in the fact that the activities of one person condition the activities of another or others, in some particular way.¹³ Under the head "Groupings" are: "fortuitous groups" such as "crowds" which are merely the arrangement of persons in time and space relations favorable to rapid communication and simultaneity of reaction, which are the conditions of certain types of activity; "natural groups" such as the family which for sociology (for biological anthropology they are something else) are other sets of conditions for activity; "likeness groups," which are groups of persons united by the similarity of their activities; "functional groups," also likeness groups identified by particular activities. These groupings and relations have all their significance for sociology as relations between, or conditions of, prevalent activities, and the study which takes as its field the social activities must take also these groupings and relations, because as the science which explains social activities it must study the groupings and relations which condition those activities.

¹³ It must always be borne in mind that the word activities includes beliefs and valuations, affections and desires—that in fact activities are for consciousness little else.

It is indeed possible by abstraction to think of these modes of relationship between activities apart from the activities between which the relations exist, and to study the relationships as products and not as conditions. But the explanation of these relationships as products is so bound up with the explanation of social activities as to be naturally included in it, and the significance of these abstractions, that is, their importance as conditions of anything beyond themselves, is so nearly exhausted by their influence upon social activities that the study of them seems inevitably to be included in the science which treats of social activities, rather than by itself to constitute the subject-matter of "sociology proper." On the other hand, it would seem that no one could think that the significance of social activities is exhausted by the fact that they condition "groupings and relations," so as to make it fitting to regard the study of social activities as the "lower story" of a science the "proper object-matter" of which was "groupings and relations."

Under the division "processes," Professor Ross has tabulated activities which aim to modify the activities of associates and so change the social situation, conditioning relations between activities of associates, changes in social activities due to divers causes and changes of every kind in the environmental conditions of activities. With reference to this part of his "map" some comments have already been made in the *American Journal of Sociology* (XI, 37 ff.). Now that we are considering his classification as a whole, the similarity between his "processes" and his "objective products" may profitably be observed. Much the same relationships which make up the list of "objective products" are enumerated also as "processes." The two lists are not identical because when one's conception mold is dipped twice into the same mass of reality it does not bring out exactly the same content, but the concepts, "communication, intercourse, fascination, subordination, imitation," in the one list are evidently from the same mass of reality as the concept discipleship in the other; likewise the concepts "intimidation, exploitation, forcible assimilation," in the one, and the concepts "slavery and vassalage" in the other. This similarity between the two lists

is not pointed out as a fault, but in order to lead up to the observation that there is no such similarity between these two lists and the remaining one of "subjective products"; for the latter are the social activities and stand forth by themselves as the unique kind of realities demanding explanation by a special science, while "processes" and "objective products" are alike in having their meaning for sociology, as incidents, manifestations, and conditions of these "planes" and "currents" of social activity.

An analytic enumeration of the conditions of social phenomena would be a service of great importance. In his enumeration of them Professor Ross has made a completer analysis of the conditioning relations between the social activities themselves than of the biologic, geographic, or technic conditions, yet under the heading "Processes" some reference to these has been included, for he mentions "assimilation *by environment*," "congregation," "conjugation," "migration," "accumulation of capital," and "incidental modification of environment." His completer reference to conditioning relations between activities is as would be expected, not only because of the predominant importance of the psychic conditions of social activities, that is, the conditioning of activities by activities, but chiefly because the characteristic contributions of Professor Ross to sociology have been not only explanations of "subjective" (which is his word for psychic) products, but also explanations of them by reference to psychic conditions.

Now, as to his classification of the subjective products themselves, explanation of which he would exclude from sociology proper, but which we (and he in his actual investigations) would take as the very subject-matter and problem phenomena of sociology proper. To begin with, it may be remarked that it is in his later work, *Social Psychology*, that he confines "sociology proper" to the study of "groups and structures." In the earlier *Foundations of Sociology*, although he presents this tripartite "map" of the sociological field with "groups and relations" as its culminating main division, yet he does not entirely exclude the study of the "subjective products" from "sociology proper"

but regards it as "the lower story" (!) of sociology (p. 8). Moreover in one paragraph he goes so far as to say that the study of groups and relations is but a segment of a science of sociology which has for its subject-matter phenomena which might be termed social activities but for the fact that the word activities does not unmistakably enough include beliefs and feelings (p. 6). This last is precisely the view which I advocate, as against his other statements, and which is more consonant with the character of his own researches as a sociologist. Concerning his discrimination in favor of the phrase "social phenomena" rather than the phrase "social activities" (two phrases which I have used as alternatives), it may be remarked in defense of my preference for the word "activities" that it is descriptive, while the word "phenomena" has only the negative virtue of escaping inaccuracy at the cost of having no special connotation, but only the relative meaninglessness of an all-inclusive name. Instead of deferring to the popular usage according to which the word activities does not unmistakably enough include beliefs and feelings, it seems to me necessary for science to insist that activities as they exist in consciousness *are* compounded beliefs and feelings. Scientific nomenclature should depart as little as possible from popular usage, but cannot be in bondage to it; popular usage obscures the psychic character and content of "activity," the very thing that sociologists have been so slow to see, but which in this moment of illumination Professor Ross was inclined to insist upon.

If we adopt the view which I have advocated and which Professor Ross declares in the paragraph just quoted, it is in the section of his "map" entitled "subjective products" that he tabulates the essential "social phenomena," the problem phenomena of "sociology proper," the study of which implies such attention as sociology bestows on other matters. That section is as follows:

SUBJECTIVE PRODUCTS

UNIFORMITIES OR PLANES

Particular

Ideas		Languages
Symbols		Mythologies
Beliefs		Religions
Knowledge		Arts
Valuations	combining into	Sciences
Desires		Manners
Ideas		Customs
Opinions		Standards of living

General

The Soul of the Crowd
 Group character
 The *Zeitgeist*

IMPERATIVES

Mandates
 Injunctions
 Rules
 Conventions
 Dogmas

INSTITUTIONS

Domestic
 Juristic
 Political
 Military
 Ecclesiastical
 Industrial
 Professional ¹⁴

The “particular uniformities” include different kinds of *individual* activities, which are also *social*, because they recur and recur so as to constitute for the observer prevalent varieties of objective social reality, and because they arise out of the mutual conditioning of activities which goes on in association. It is stated, these elementary activities combine to form languages, mythologies, etc. It is equally true that they combine in massive and complex unions to form the “general” uniformities, and also that imperatives are combinations of particular beliefs and

¹⁴ *Foundations of Sociology*, 98.

opinions with particular valuations and desires, and even that institutions are combinations and interrelations of elements of the same kind, which of course like all beliefs and desires tend to issue in corresponding psycho-physical (or as we say in considering them not as individual instances but in their mass character and social origin, socio-physical) manifestations. The "particular uniformities" are in fact the social elements.

The psychic character of the concepts included in this first group is obvious and it is easy to contemplate them not only as mass phenomena and features of the objective psychic world but also as they exist for the consciousness of the individual associate.

There is little effort to avoid overlapping between concepts either here or elsewhere in Professor Ross's classification, so that he gives as separate headings "ideas," "beliefs," "knowledge," "opinions," four entries which might be united in a single concept. Such overlapping may appear because the concepts enumerated in this whole table were not chosen primarily with reference to purposes of classification; they seem to be rather a list of the concepts formed from time to time in contemplating different aspects of social reality, and found useful in dealing with that subject-matter and finally set down in groups of co-ordinates, with little effort at strict differentiation.

We pass now to the most detailed of all these classifications, the one contained in Professor Giddings' *Inductive Sociology*.

On page 7 of that work the field of sociology is thus described:

Sociology is the science of mental phenomena in some of their higher complications and reactions, as presented by a plural number of interacting minds, and of the constructive evolution of a social medium, through which the adaptations of life and its environment become reciprocal.

And just above,

Since the phenomena of a social population are chiefly mental and moral, the elements of social description and explanation are for the most part psychological. Sociology presupposes psychology as psychology presupposes biology, and as biology presupposes sciences of inorganic phenomena.

In Professor Giddings' yet more recent work, entitled *Descriptive and Historical Sociology*, he states it as his view "that all social bonds may be resolved into some common activity of individual minds," so that society is properly regarded "as a mode of mental activity" (*Descriptive and Historical Sociology*, 5).

It seems to be in doubtful accord with this true view, and a survival of the notion that the "group" is the social reality, when he formally announces his idea of "the unit of sociological investigation" and says:

The unit of investigation, then, in sociology is the *socius*—that is to say the individual who is not only an animal and a conscious mind, but also a companion, a learner, a teacher, and co-worker.¹⁵

Surely Professor Giddings cannot mean that the conduct of an individual, taken as a whole, is the unit of social activity, or the *socius* the unit of sociological investigation, in the sense that an individual person and his conduct is the final element reached by sociological analysis. For that, the *socius* is too complex and unique a concept. The ultimate units into which scientific investigation resolves the social reality must be singled out by a process far more analytic than that required to separate the individual from the crowd. The conduct of the individual is a complex and multifarious compound; each prevalent activity in which he participates is a separate object for investigation. To speak of the *socius* as the ultimate unit of investigation is somewhat as if a botanist should take a bouquet as his unit of investigation. As each particular flower in the bouquet is a representative of a botanical variety, so each belief or practice which the *socius* shares with such a number of others that this activity by its prevalence becomes socially significant is a specimen of a sociological variety. Each such variety of social activity is an object for investigation, and each individual's participation in such a prevalent activity is a unit of investigation.

The *socius* is not only too complex but also too *unique* to be taken as the ultimate unit of investigation. *Socii* in primitive societies are like bouquets all plucked in the same garden where

¹⁵ *Inductive Sociology*, 10.

but few varieties grow, but in developed societies there is no such comprehensive similarity between associates. The unit of a scientific investigation which hopes to issue in the discovery of laws, or even of "established tendencies," must be a recurrent phenomenon. The *socius* in a developed society is not a recurrent phenomenon, and may be as unique as a historical event, and would afford proper subject-matter for biography which is related to sociology as history is, rather than for sociology.

Professor Giddings is much engaged in analyzing the *socius* into traits which predispose men to similar or different participation in the social process, and this with special reference to the "affinity" of predisposition which results in "like response to stimulus" and "consciousness of kind." In this connection it is interesting to observe the contrast between Professor Giddings' treatment of the "consciousness of kind" as coterminous with social reality, and the essence of social reality wherever it exists, and the treatment of "sympathy" and "sociability" by Professor Ross, in chapters under those headings in his *Social Control*, where he relegates them to a comparatively insignificant rôle. It is also worth while noting that, in succeeding portions of his work, he shows how, in the absence of any special affinity, men of different races, incongruous creeds, opposing classes, and warring interests are held together by promptings from without and motives implanted within, which regulate conduct, the effects of which radiate into society far beyond the sphere of their acquaintance and sympathy.

I do not wish to be understood as objecting to the emphasis which Professor Giddings lays upon the *socius*, that is, the individual as a social phenomenon, provided there is kept in mind some clear and workable conception of the more ultimate elements of investigation to be reached by analysis, of the minute recurrent objects of explanation, and of the relation between them and all the conditions that modify and determine them. On the contrary it should be emphasized that sociology goes farther than any other science in explaining the individual life, considered as a stream of experience-activity. Psychology usually stops short of the individual. The contrast implied by the names

of social and individual psychology is an utterly false one. So-called individual psychology is better termed "general" psychology. As a rule it has dealt with nothing that is individual, but rather with what is universal to man, the "typisch und allgemeingültig" as Wundt says. It is sociology that investigates the building-up of the content of consciousness which differs at different times and places, the individual's share in which constitutes his individual life, a life composed of activities which have been socially evolved, and which by each individual are socially derived. The individual is a concrete, complex, unanalyzed sample of the social reality.

Similarly there is no objection to any emphasis that Professor Giddings or Professor Ross or any other sociologist may lay upon the notion of groups or groupings as social phenomena, provided it be kept in mind that groups have their significance and even their existence as social phenomena, by virtue of the interrelated activities which constitute their unity and character as societies, or else they are merely space and time relations, which are conditions favorable to the existence of society, but not society itself. Near the close of his *Inductive Sociology* (pp. 266-67) Professor Giddings says: "The association of men may be an association mainly of presence or mainly of activity . . . either presence or activity is at any given time the relatively important fact." Now an association "of activity" and one "of presence" are not equally societies. The fact that people who are united by the similarity and mutual conditioning of their activities are usually in each other's presence, simply means that togetherness in time and space is the condition most favorable to the prevalence of similar and mutually conditioning activities. The grouping of persons is moreover overt to the most superficial observer, and being the usual and patent condition of social reality, by a metonymy of thought it comes to be regarded as the very essence and true definition of that reality. Presence in time and space, so far from being the essence of the social reality, is not even an essential condition of it; post and telegraph and telephone may replace presence and make it

unnecessary as a condition of associated activity;¹⁷ the newspaper and Associated Press make one "public" of multitudes who never see each other or hear each other's voices, and give rise to phenomena which, if not identical with those conditioned by physical presence in a crowd, are enough like them to receive the name of "mob mind." The printed page relates our activities even with those of Aristotle, Cicero, and Jeremiah. Prevalent interrelated activities which go on in human consciousness are the essential social realities, and the interrelation of these activities requires only that a thought of the activities of B have a place among the activities of A,¹⁸ and that the thought of B's thoughts and sentiments and deeds elicits or represses elements in the current of A's activity. It is true that "the mere association of presence has played an important part in the mental and social evolution of man," but so also has climate, and "association of presence," and all "grouping," however much more important to sociology than climate, is like a temperate climate, fertile soil, and rivers and harbors, in being a condition favorable to the essential social reality, and not that reality itself. Instead of saying "either presence or activity is at any given time the relatively important fact" let it be said rather that "activities" are always the problem facts and "presence" when it plays a rôle is a conditioning fact.

If natural physical environment is important enough to call for a special division of sociology, called geographic sociology, then groups and groupings may, on the same ground, deserve to be the subject of another subdivision of sociology; but I prefer to treat them under the heads of technic and psychologic sociology. Mere togetherness in time and space is a technic condition, a work of man as much as stock breeding or agriculture or transportation of commodities. A crowd or a dense population, in this aspect, is a modification of the environment, to be classed with the building of roads and development of means of transportation and communication. Indeed, density for sociology means facility of communication; and travel, mi-

¹⁷ Ross on "Mob Mind," *Social Psychology*, chap. iv, especially pp. 63-64.

¹⁸ Cf. Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order*.

gration, and transportation of goods, that is the rearrangement of special relations, all belong in the same class as one subdivision of technic sociology. Group relationships other than spacial are similarities and conditioning relations between activities. They may be independent of spacial togetherness, and are facts of quite another order, so that the two should not be classed together and confused. The relations between activities are subject-matter for psychic sociology. The two sorts of conditioning are brought together but not confused when we consider the effect of spacial togetherness in the crowd in heightening certain phenomena of imitation. In such an explanation the physical and psychic elements need no more to be confused than they are when we consider the telegraph and the mail and the newspaper in heightening suggestion and imitation and in the creation of public opinion. Even organization is a special form of the interrelating of activities, purposely designed to serve practical ends, a special form of that conditioning of activities by activities which falls within the scope of psychologic sociology. Organization is distinctly a correlation of activities so that they condition each other. It usually includes "superiority" and "subordination," and integration of functional groups by similar activities, and a union of interests or aims including all the persons who engage in the organized activity, and it always includes *differentiated* activities which are correlated in the service of an end. In this view, then, mere "presence" groups are among those conditions favorable to social phenomena which are studied by technic sociology, while organizations are true activity groups in which the mutual conditioning of activities is to be unraveled by psychologic sociology.

The classification of Professor Giddings is divided into four parts. Part I is entitled "The Social Population." Under this heading he first enumerates items in the description of the geographic and technic conditions surrounding a population, including the climate and topography of the country occupied, its flora and fauna, and the varieties of country and city buildings; then particulars as to the number and density of the population

itself, its birth and death rates, migrations, age, sex, nationality, race, and intermarriages.

Part II is entitled "The Social Mind." It contains first a list of the traits which dispose a population to similar or dissimilar response to stimulus including such organic physical variations as are indicated by the words "choleric," "sanguine," and "phlegmatic," and such phases of social development as are indicated by the prevalence of the "conjectural," "analytical," "deductive," "speculative," and "critically intellectual"; then "new desires and motives," the characteristic pleasures which are appreciated, traits of character, such as "courage," and "equanimity," and the various types of individual character into which these traits combine.

Next, continuing Part II, there follows an enumeration of traits which dispose a population to a high or low degree of "consciousness of kind" which to some degree repeats the preceding, and includes prompt, slow, intermittent, and persistent response to stimulus, imitativeness, reverence to authority; and then as "objective" conditions of co-operation the amounts and modes of communication and association, and finally the social activities which are developed in co-operation. *Here follows Professor Giddings' classification of the social activities.*¹⁹ It seems to me a very decided advance upon any of the preceding ones. Omitting minute subdivisions it is as follows:

I. CULTURAL

1. *Cultural thought*

- a) Lingual
- b) Animistic aesthetic
- c) Animistic religious
- d) Scientific

2. *Cultural activity*

- a) Ceremonial of manners
of dress
of festivities
- b) Music and dancing
- c) Games
- d) Poetic arts

¹⁹ *Inductive Sociology*, 164 ff.

- e) Plastic arts
- f) Religious exercises
- g) Exploration and research

[The failure to give either music or painting a place by itself, co-ordinate with the poetic and plastic arts, seems a curious omission.]

II. ECONOMIC

1. *Economic thought*

- a) to e) From notions of luck and magic to advanced economic theory as to utility, value, etc. (but not including the technologic ideas of which the economic activities are expressions).

2. *Economic activity*

- a) In agriculture
- b) In mining
- c) In fisheries
- d) In manufactures
- e) In commerce
- f) In transportation
- g) In finance

III. MORAL AND JURISTIC

1. *Moral and juristic thought*

- a) to r) for example, b) Dominated by idea of private revenge.
k) Belief in probative value of ordeals. n) Abstract and complex ideas of goodness, moral principles, moral law.
r) Ideas of the exclusive jurisdiction of the state.

2. *Moral and juristic activity*

- a) to g) for example, c) Boycotting, etc. d) Lynching. g) Work of specialized courts.

IV. POLITICAL

1. *Political thought*

- a) Primary concepts, aims
(1) to (5) for example, the kind of citizens desired and the conception of community attainment preferred, e.g., splendor, justice, equality.
- b) Secondary concepts, means and methods
(1) to (8) for example, concepts of policies favored as force, agitation or discussion, and education.

2. *Political activity*

Part III bears the title "Social Organization" and enumerates forms of organization, types of families, of hordes, of clans, of tribes, of tribal confederacies, of hamlets, villages, or

parishes, of municipalities, of counties or departments of provinces or commonwealths; lists the items that may be included in the description of "component-constituent societies" (p. 220), and of special and voluntary associations.

Part IV under the title "The Social Welfare" tabulates facts relating to international and domestic peace, such as the number of wars, their duration and the losses inflicted, and facts relating to the degree of realization of liberty, equality, increase and distribution of wealth, and arrangement of social classes as to occupation and education.

I have given but a very meager outline of Professor Giddings' classification except his lists of the psychic activities themselves, and even that has been only imperfectly presented. He offers a very extensive enumeration of particulars, made out with an evident determination to be objective and put things down as they actually present themselves, and his specific entries are the results of discriminating observation. No doubt it is clear to his own mind which among all that he enumerates are the social phenomena to be explained, and which are only conditioning phenomena, but he proceeds all the way from climate and buildings, through the traits of the *socius*, up to the social activities and then on to the enumeration of the local, political, and genetic groups contained in a great complex society, and the elements in the description of the general welfare of such a society including peace, general plenty, liberty, etc. The social activities are left embedded in the almost endless lists and are by no means so lifted out as to stand forth as *the realities to be explained*, of which all the rest are conditions or incidents. However clear the determination to be objective, fruitful scientific work must be guided by general concepts. Professor Giddings has reached and declared the view that "sociology is a science of mental phenomena," and "society a mode of mental activity," yet he does not adopt specific social activities as his units of investigation, but declares the *socius* to be the unit of investigation. And in his enumeration of all things that for any reason are of interest to sociology, he does not seem to me clearly enough to set the network of social activities in its true place

as *the object of explanation*, but seems to be largely dominated by the old unanalyzed concept of society as a population of human organisms, under political control, inhabiting a given territory, a concept which emphasizes some obvious and familiar facts, but carries misleading implications and omits from view the essential nature of social reality.²⁰ However clear in his own mind the concept of the nature of the social reality and the task of sociology may be, he does not make clear to his reader where he is analyzing the social reality by naming its constituent activities, where he is simply listing items in the description of these activities, and where he is enumerating conditions which affect the social activities.

The concept of essential social realities, and ultimate problem-phenomena for sociology must be in terms of activities. The lives of associates are, for their own consciousness, streams of experience-activity. Societies are unified within and distinguished from outsiders by common and interrelated activities. The mere grouping together of human beings in space and time is not society, but only a condition favorable to these interrelated activities; and the predispositions and traits ingrained in the physical organisms of men are similarly conditions of the activities which constitute social reality, and are not the social reality itself. When the prevalent and socially conditioned activities are recognized as our problem phenomena, we can focus attention upon them with the result that whatever else is important to sociology will come duly within the field of vision in its proportions and relations. Before the students of a science are ready to classify the phenomena to be studied an antecedent step in analysis must have been taken, namely, the phenomena to be studied by that science must have been at least roughly identified and distinguished from the rest of the phenomenal world. They are especially in danger of being confused with the closely related phenomena by which they are conditioned, and if explanation is to proceed successfully it must be guided by clear recogni-

²⁰ The contrast between these two concepts of society was brought out in the *American Journal of Sociology*, X, 625 ff.

tion of the nature of the problem-phenomena as distinct from the conditioning phenomena.

Classification is based upon discrimination. First, must be made the discrimination just insisted upon between social activities and all other phenomena in the world besides, especially those most closely related to them, and therefore most likely to be confused with them. To disentangle the social activities from these closely related conditioning phenomena is essential if we are to observe the relations between the two, and these relations are the essentials of sociological explanation.

Second, follows discrimination between various kinds of social activity, which affords the classification of the social phenomena themselves.

Third, we must distinguish minor variations, such as increase or diminution in quantity, from variations in kind, and discern the different sorts of minor variation to which social phenomena are subject; it is important that they be enumerated but they should not be mingled and confused in the list of kinds of social activities.

Fourth, there should be a classified list of the various kinds of phenomena which may be related to social phenomena as conditions, including the observed types of conditioning relations between the social activities themselves.

Fifth, those phenomena should be discriminated which may be related to social phenomena as consequences, in so far as these consequences are the manifestations of social phenomena by reference to which the latter are described and evaluated.

Attempting now to apply these principles it becomes necessary to venture upon a classification of our own.

[To be continued]